Scope of Practice Debate Lingers

The House Labor, Health and Social Services Committee will hear Senate File 55 - Optometry Scope Expansion, tomorrow upon adjournment. WMS continues to support ophthalmology in their efforts to bring clarity to the issue for legislators while ensuring that our position is never in any way misinterpreted to be one of disrespect toward optometry.

Wyoming optometrists are fortunate to practice in a state that currently so artfully defines optometry in statute. W.S. 33-23-101 (b) defines optometry as, “the employment of any means other than the use of therapeutic lasers or surgery for diagnosing and treating ocular pathology and for the measurement of the powers or range of human vision or the determination of the accommodative and refractive status of the human eye or the scope of its functions in general or the adaptation of lenses or frames for the aid thereof.” Given this broad definition, optometrists are granted broad authority to care for Wyoming patients to the height of their training without jeopardizing patient safety by entering into the laser and scalpel surgical space.

The Wyoming Ophthalmological Society (WOS) and WMS are proud of our efforts to seek compromise with optometry throughout the process. Although unsuccessful thus far, we hope our members and your patients...
will also be proud of the fact that we navigated this space with respect for optometry and ongoing efforts to help update their practice act with respect to pharmaceutical expansion and updates to the board composition of the board of optometric examiners.

Ultimately, regardless of the outcome of debate this week on SF 55 and others, the most important thing is that all providers within the Wyoming healthcare team can work collaboratively together to do the right thing for patients. Thank you to all of our members who have crafted thoughtful messages to our legislators about this important issue and thank you for representing the physician profession so honorably by offering your genuine respect and appreciation for what your optometry colleagues contribute to Wyoming healthcare while offering your insights and perspectives on the importance of patient safety in our rural state.

**Medicaid**

Several Medicaid-related bills continue to move through the process this year. WMS was disappointed that the Medicaid expansion bill died, but is pleased that the legislature continues to want to discuss the merits of the proposal. Although we don't necessarily believe that more study is necessary to know whether or not Wyoming patients and providers would be positively impacted by expansion, at least studying expansion keeps the conversation alive and active.

A bill to require community engagement through school, work or volunteering in order to maintain eligibility for Medicaid and SNAP seems to have stalled at the desk of the House Speaker. However, a bill to authorize state Medicaid to reimburse certified lay midwives for home births continues to gain support and traction.

**Child Protections Bill Moves Forward**

Senate File 60 - Protection of Children - Child Endangerment

Amendments passed the House Judiciary Committee late Thursday night with the help of Wyoming Academy of Pediatrics Vice President Andrew Rose, MD, and the Child Advocacy Project. This bill seeks to strengthen protections for children in authorizing sibling at risk exams in circumstances where another child residing in the home is the confirmed victim of abuse. A big thanks is due to Wyoming pediatricians and the Wyoming Academy of Family Physicians for their help and support in moving this effort forward this year.